

China cuts off vital U.S. contacts over Pelosi Taiwan visit



A boat moves through the water at the 68-nautical-mile scenic spot, the closest point in mainland China to the island of Taiwan, in Pingtan in southeastern China's Fujian Province, Friday, Aug. 5, 2022.

Associated Press

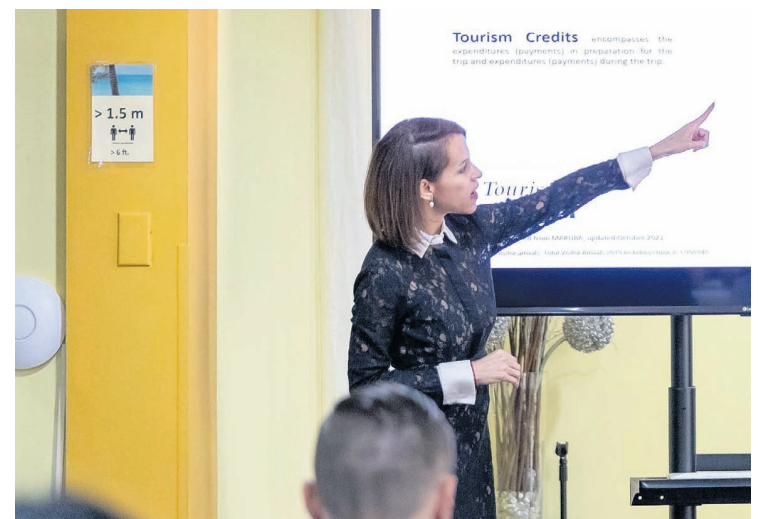
By ELLEN KNICKMEYER, ZEKE MILLER and DAVID RISING WASHINGTON (AP) — China cut off contacts with the United States on vital issues Friday — including military matters and crucial climate cooperation — as concerns rose that the Communist government's hostile reaction to House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's Taiwan visit could signal a lasting, more aggressive approach toward its U.S. rival and the self-ruled island. China's move to freeze key lines of communication compounded the worsening of relations from Pelosi's visit and from the Chinese

response with military exercises off Taiwan, including firing missiles that splashed down in surrounding waters. After the White House summoned China's ambassador, Qin Gang, late Thursday to protest the military exercises, White House spokesman John Kirby on Friday condemned the decision to end important dialogue with the United States as "irresponsible." The White House spokesman blasted China's "provocative" actions since Pelosi's trip to Taiwan, which China claims as part of its territory. But Kirby noted that some channels

of communication remain open between military officials in the two countries. He repeated daily assurances that the U.S. had not changed its policy toward the Communist mainland and the self-ruled island. "Bottom line is we're going to continue our efforts to keep opening lines of communication that are protecting our interests and our values," Kirby said. He declined to speak about any damage to long-term relations between China and the United States, calling that a discussion for later.

Continued on next page

A.T.A. studying the impact of the increase in cost of life on the demand for tourism on Aruba



"Businessmen and other stakeholders continue with great optimism for the possibility of reopening the border"



ENTERTAINMENT SCHEDULE				WATER'S EDGE RESTAURANT & BAR	
MONDAY Angela Flores Violinist 6:30pm-8:30pm	TUESDAY Jean Paul Saxophonist 6:30pm-8:30pm	WEDNESDAY Eddie Kroon Singer 6:30pm-8:30pm	THURSDAY Marrybell Maduro Singer 6:30pm-8:30pm	Located at Costa Linda Beach Resort Tel +297 5838000 Ext 8106 All premium brands Elegant dining, spectacular ocean views enjoyed al fresco or in air conditioned comfort.	
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EVERYDAY HAPPY HOUR 12:00pm to 1:00pm 4:00pm to 6:00pm 9:00pm to 10:00pm					
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Continued from Front

Taiwan has put its military on alert and staged civil defense drills, but the overall mood remained calm on Friday. Flights have been canceled or diverted and fishermen have remained in port to avoid the Chinese drills.

On the Chinese coast across from Taiwan, tourists gathered to try to catch a glimpse of military aircraft. A minister at the Chinese Embassy in Washington, Jing Quan, told reporters that Pelosi's mission of support for the democratic government of Taiwan has had "a severe impact on the political foundation of China-U.S. relations, seriously infringed upon China's sovereignty and (territorial) integrity and ... undermines peace and stability across the Taiwan Straits."

Long term, a significantly more confrontational relationship between China and the U.S. threatens an equilibrium under which Presidents Joe Biden and Xi Jinping's governments have sparred on human rights, trade, competition and countless other issues but avoided direct conflict and maintained occasional top-level contacts toward other matters, including cutting climate-damaging emissions. A joint U.S.-China deal to fight climate change struck by Xi and then-President Barack Obama in November of 2014 is credited as a turning point that led to the landmark 2015 Paris agreement in which nearly every nation in the world pledged to try to curb emissions of heat-trapping gases. Seven years later during climate talks in Glasgow, another U.S.-China deal helped smooth over bumps to another international climate deal.

China and the United States are the world's No. 1 and No. 2 climate polluters, together producing nearly



U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, center, arrives at the plenary session of the lower house in Tokyo, Friday, Aug. 5, 2022.

Associated Press

40% of all fossil-fuel emissions.

Ominously, experts in China-U.S. relations warned that China's diplomatic and military moves appeared to go beyond retaliatory measures for the visit and could open a new, more openly hostile era, and a more uncertain time for Taiwan's democratic government.

China-U.S. relations are "in a downward spiral," said Bonnie Glaser, head of the Asia program at the German Marshall Fund.

"And I think that China is likely to change the status quo in the Taiwan Strait in ways that are going to be harmful to Taiwan and are going to be disadvantageous to the United States," Glaser said.

In recent years, other rounds of tensions between China and its neighbors over the India border, regional islands and the South China Sea have ended with China asserting new territorial claims and enforcing them, noted John Culver, a former East Asia national intelligence

officer, now a senior fellow at the Atlantic Council. The same could happen now over Taiwan, Culver said. "So I don't know how this ends. We've seen how it begins."

China's measures this week are the latest steps intended to punish the U.S. for allowing the visit to the island it claims as its own territory, to be annexed by force if necessary. China on Thursday launched threatening military exercises just off Taiwan's coasts, running through Sunday.

Some missiles were sent flying over Taiwan itself, Chinese officials told state media — a significant increase in China's menacing of the island.

China routinely complains when Taiwan has direct contacts with foreign governments, but its response to the Pelosi visit — she was the highest-ranking American official in 25 years — has been unusually strong. It appears to derail a rare encouraging note — high-level in-person meetings between top officials in recent months including the

defense chiefs at an Asia security conference in Singapore and Foreign Minister Wang Yi and Secretary of State Antony Blinken at a Group of 20 meeting in Indonesia.

Those talks were viewed as steps in a positive direction in an otherwise poisoned relationship. Now, talks have been suspended even on climate, where the two countries' envoys had met multiple times.

China stopped short of interrupting economic and trade talks, where it is looking to Biden to lift tariffs imposed by President Donald Trump on imports from China.

On Friday, China's Foreign Ministry said dialogue between U.S. and Chinese regional commanders and defense department heads would be canceled, along with talks on military maritime safety. Cooperation on returning illegal immigrants, criminal investigations, transnational crime, illegal drugs and climate change will be suspended, the ministry said.

China's actions come ahead of a key congress of the ruling Communist Party later this year at which President Xi is expected to obtain a third five-year term as party leader. With the economy stumbling, the party has stoked nationalism and issued near-daily attacks on the government of Taiwanese President Tsai

Ing-wen, which refuses to recognize Taiwan as part of China.

China said Friday that more than 100 warplanes and 10 warships have taken part in live-fire military drills surrounding Taiwan over the past two days. Also, mainly symbolic sanctions against Pelosi and her family were announced.

On the China coast, fighter jets could be heard flying overhead, and tourists taking photos chanted, "Let's take Taiwan back," looking out into the blue waters of the Taiwan Strait from Pingtan island, a popular scenic spot in China's Fujian province.

Pelosi's visit has stirred emotions among the Chinese public, and the government's response "makes us feel our motherland is very powerful and gives us confidence that the return of Taiwan is the irresistible trend," said Wang Lu, a tourist from neighboring Zhejiang province. China is a "powerful country and it will not allow anyone to offend its own territory," said Liu Bolin, a high school student visiting the island.

China's insistence that Taiwan is its territory and its threat to use force to reclaim control have featured in Communist Party statements, the education system and the state-controlled media for more than seven decades since the sides were divided amid civil war in 1949.

Taiwan residents overwhelmingly favor maintaining the status quo of de facto independence and reject China's demands that the island unify with the mainland under Communist control.

Beyond Taiwan, five of the missiles fired by China landed in Japan's Exclusive Economic Zone off Hateruma, an island far south of Japan's main islands, Japanese Defense Minister Nobuo Kishi said. He said Japan protested the missiles to China as "serious threats to Japan's national security and the safety of the Japanese people."

In Tokyo, where Pelosi is winding up her Asia trip, she said China cannot stop U.S. officials from visiting Taiwan. □



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U.S. to issue ID to migrants awaiting deportation proceedings

By AMY TAXIN
Associated Press

U.S. immigration authorities are planning to issue photo ID cards to immigrants in deportation proceedings in a bid to slash paper use and help people stay up-to-date on required meetings and court hearings, officials said.

The proposal from Immigration and Customs Enforcement is still being developed as a pilot program, and it was not immediately clear how many the agency would issue. The cards would not be an official form of federal identification, and would state they are to be used by the Department of Homeland Security.

The idea is for immigrants to be able to access information about their cases online by using a card rather than paper documents that are cumbersome and can fade over time, officials said. They said ICE officers could also run checks on the cards in the field.

"Moving to a secure card will save the agency millions, free up resources, and ensure information is quickly accessible to DHS officials while reducing the agency's FOIA backlog," an ICE spokesperson said in a statement, referring to unfulfilled public requests for agency documents. Homeland Security gets more Freedom of Information Act requests than any other federal agency, according to government data, and many of those involve immigration records. The proposal has sparked a flurry of questions about



People line up for a commercial bus that will take them to the San Antonio airport at a warehouse run by the Mission: Border Hope nonprofit group run by the United Methodist Church in Eagle Pass, Texas, May 23, 2022.

Associated Press

what the card might be used for and how secure it would be. Some fear the program could lead to tracking of immigrants awaiting their day in immigration court, while others suggest the cards could advertised by migrant smugglers to try to induce others to make the dangerous trip north.

The Biden administration is seeking \$10 million for the so-called ICE Secure Docket Card in a budget proposal for the next fiscal year.

It was not immediately clear if the money would cover the pilot or a broader program or when it would begin.

The administration has faced pressure as the number of migrants seeking to enter the country on the southwest border has increased.

Border Patrol agents stopped migrants more than 1.1 million times from January to June, up nearly one-third from the same

period of an already-high 2021.

Many migrants are turned away under COVID-19-related restrictions. But many are allowed in and either are detained while their cases churn through the immigration courts or are released and required to check in periodically with ICE officers until a judge rules on their cases.

Those most likely to be released in the United States are from countries where expulsion under the public health order is complicated due to costs, logistics or strained diplomatic relations, including Cuba, Venezuela and Nicaragua.

At shelters, bus stations and airports along the U.S.-Mexico border, migrants carefully guard their papers in plastic folders. These are often the only documents they have to get past airport checkpoints to their final destinations in the United States. The often dog-eared papers can be critical to getting around.

An immigration case can take years and the system can be confusing, especially for immigrants who know little English and may need to work with an array of government agencies, including ICE and U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, which issues work permits and green cards. U.S. immigration courts are overseen by the Justice Department.

Gregory Z. Chen, senior director of government relations at the American Immigration Lawyers Association, said migrants have mistakenly gone to ICE offices instead of court for scheduled hearings that they then missed as a result. He said so long as immigrants' privacy is protected, the card could be helpful.

"If ICE is going to be using this new technology to enable non citizens to check in with ICE, or to report information about their location and address, and then to receive information about their case — where their court hearings might be, what the requirements might be for them to comply with the law — that would be a welcome approach," Chen said.

It was not clear whether Homeland Security's Transportation Security Administration would accept the cards for airport travel or whether private businesses would consider it valid.

The United States doesn't have a national photo identification card. Residents instead use a range of cards to prove identification, including driver's li-

censes, state ID cards and consular ID cards. What constitutes a valid ID is often determined by the entity seeking to verify a person's identity.

Talia Inlender, deputy director of the Center for Immigration Law and Policy at University of California, Los Angeles' law school, said she was skeptical that using a card to access electronic documents would simplify the process for immigrants, especially those navigating the system without a lawyer, and questioned whether the card has technology that could be used to increase government surveillance of migrants.

But having an ID could be useful, especially for migrants who need to travel within the U.S., Inlender said.

"Many people are fleeing persecution and torture in their countries. They're not showing up with government paperwork," Inlender said. "Having a form of identification to be able to move throughout daily life has the potential to be a helpful thing."

That has some Republican lawmakers concerned that the cards could induce more migrants to come to the U.S. or seek to access benefits they're not eligible for. A group of 16 lawmakers sent a letter last week to ICE raising questions about the plan.

"The Administration is now reportedly planning yet another reckless policy that will further exacerbate this ongoing crisis," the letter said. □

Judge to decide if firing squad or electric chair is cruel

COLUMBIA, S.C. (AP) — Whether South Carolina can start executing prisoners again either with a firing squad or electric chair is now in the hands of a judge after a trial over whether shooting or electrocuting inmates is cruel and unusual punishment banned by the U.S. Constitution. Lawyers for four death row inmates argued this week the prisoners would feel terrible pain whether their bodies were "cooking" by electricity or heart stopped by marksman's bullet — assuming they are on target. Attorneys for the state countered with their own experts who said death by the yet-to-be-used firing squad or the rarely-used-20th-century electric chair would be instantaneous and the condemned would not feeling any pain. The state Supreme Court ordered Judge Jocelyn Newman to rule within 30 days, but it almost certainly won't be the end of the case. Whichever side loses is expected to appeal. From 1995 to 2011 - when the state's last execution was performed - South Carolina carried out the death penalty on 36 prisoners with lethal injections. But the state's supply of lethal injection drugs expired in 2013, and pharmaceutical companies have refused to sell more for executions.



This photo provided by the South Carolina Dept. of Corrections shows the state's death chamber in Columbia, S.C., including the electric chair, right, and a firing squad chair, left.

Associated Press

Prison officials asked lawmakers for help and in 2021 they made the state's electric chair, built in 1912, the default method for executions and let prisoners choose a new firing squad if they wish. During this week's trial, a Corrections Department official said he devised the firing squad protocols after consulting a prison official in Utah, location of the only three inmates to die by firing squad since 1977. Colie Rushton, the department's security director, testified the .308 Winchester ammunition to be used is designed to fragment and split up in the heart to make

death happen as fast as possible, according to media reports from the trial. Much of the rest of the trial was each side calling its own experts to detail whether inmates feel any pain before they die. The human brain remains conscious at least 15 seconds after a person's heart stops beating, said Dr. Jonathan Arden, who formerly led the Washington D.C. Medical Examiner's office. Arden, testifying on behalf of the inmates said it appeared at least 10% of prisoners in cases he reviewed remained conscious after the first shock of an electrocution.

"Forgive me for saying it so plain," Arden testified about the electric chair, "but you get the effects on parts on the body, including internal organs, that is the equivalent of cooking." Experts for the state testified the shock delivered by the electric chair is so great and the use of ammunition that shatters when it hits bone creating a number of fragments to destroy the heart means almost immediate loss of consciousness and no pain, retired forensic pathologist Dr. D'Michelle DuPre said. "I believe it would be so quick they would not experience pain at all," DuPre

testified, according to media reports. Lawyers for the inmates also submitted autopsy photos and reports from inmates who died in the electric chair, saying they demonstrate the pain suffered. Those documents will be reviewed by the judge and not made public. Just three prisoners in South Carolina have chosen the electric chair since lethal injection was made available in 1995. In closing arguments, lawyers for the state said the other side did not prove that electrocution or a firing squad is more painful than lethal injection, a method that has long been allowed across the country. "We are in a court of law. This court's job is to decide questions of law based on the law and based on the facts that it's heard," said attorney William Grayson Lambert who is representing the state. Lawyers for Justice 360, a group that fights for fairness and transparency in death penalty and other major criminal cases and is representing the inmates, said this case wasn't just about cold facts. "This case isn't all about science," attorney Joshua Kendrick said according to media reports. "Our decisions today are guided by mercy." □

Storms ground U.S. air travelers as airlines cancel flights



People wait in a TSA line at the John F. Kennedy International Airport on June 28, 2022, in New York.

Associated Press

By The Associated Press
Tens of thousands of flyers had their travel plans up-

ended Friday after airlines canceled more than 1,100 flights for a second straight

day because of thunderstorms hitting the East Coast. The New York City area's three major airports and Reagan National Airport outside Washington, D.C., recorded the most cancellations by Friday afternoon, according to tracking service FlightAware. American Airlines scrubbed more than 200 flights, or 6% of its schedule. Republic Airways, which operates smaller planes for American Eagle, Delta Connection and United Express, also canceled more than 200 flights, about 20% of its schedule. Another 3,700 flights were

delayed by midafternoon. Thunderstorms were causing delays averaging more than 90 minutes at LaGuardia Airport in New York and Newark Liberty International in New Jersey, according to the Federal Aviation Administration. The FAA said storms also could cause delays at major airports from Florida to Boston. About 1,200 U.S. flights were canceled Thursday - 4.6% of all scheduled flights, and the highest number since July 25, according to FlightAware. Travelers have been hit with widespread cancellations and delays this summer. Travel bounced back faster

than expected — to about 88% of pre-pandemic levels in July — and airlines weren't able to increase staffing fast enough. They have been cutting back on schedules in an attempt to make remaining flights more reliable. Airlines flying in the U.S. had a bad June, canceling more than 21,000 flights or 2.7%, up from 1.8% in June 2019, before airlines pushed workers to quit during the pandemic. The airlines did better in July, however, canceling about 14,000 flights, or 1.8%. Delays have been more persistent — above 23% in both June and July. □

Kremlin says Griner swap must be discussed without publicity

MOSCOW (AP) — The Kremlin said Friday that it's open to talking about a possible prisoner exchange involving American basketball star Brittney Griner but strongly warned Washington against publicizing the issue.

Griner, a two-time U.S. Olympic champion and an eight-time all-star with the WNBA's Phoenix Mercury, has been detained in Russia since Feb. 17 after police at a Moscow airport said they found vape cartridges containing cannabis oil in her luggage.

A judge convicted the 31-year-old athlete Thursday of drug possession and smuggling, and sentenced her to nine years in prison. The politically charged case comes amid high tensions between Moscow and Washington over Russia's military action in Ukraine.

Asked at the White House Friday about the prospects of securing Griner's release, President Joe Biden said: "I'm hopeful ... We're working hard."

In an extraordinary move, U.S. Secretary of State

Antony Blinken spoke last week to Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, urging him to accept a deal under which Griner and Paul Whelan, an American jailed in Russia on espionage charges, would go free.

Lavrov and Blinken were both in Cambodia on Friday for a meeting of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations. Blinken did not even glance at his Russian counterpart as they took their seats at an East Asia Summit.

Lavrov told reporters that Blinken didn't try to contact him while they were attending the ASEAN meeting.

"We were separated by just one person at the discussion table, but I didn't feel his desire to catch me. My buttons are all in place," he said when asked about Washington's statement that Blinken would try to buttonhole Lavrov for a quick interaction in Phnom Penh.

Lavrov said Moscow was "ready to discuss" a prisoner swap but that the topic should only be discussed via a dedicated Russia-U.S.



WNBA star and two-time Olympic gold medalist Brittney Griner is escorted from a court room after a hearing, in Khimki just outside Moscow, Russia, Thursday, Aug. 4, 2022.

Associated Press

channel that Biden and Russian President Vladimir Putin agreed to establish when they met in Geneva in June 2021.

"If the Americans again try to engage in public diplomacy and make loud statements about their intention to take certain steps, it's their business, I would even say their problem," Lavrov said. "The Americans often have trouble observing agreements on calm and professional work."

In Moscow, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov made

the same point more harshly, saying "the U.S. already has made mistakes, trying to solve such problems via 'microphone diplomacy.' They are not solved that way."

He, too, emphasized that any discussions on a possible trade should be held via the previously established confidential channels that Putin and Biden agree to during last year's summit.

"Such mechanisms exist, but they will be thrown into doubt if the discussion

continues in the public domain," Peskov said. He said: "If we discuss any nuances related to the issue of exchange via media, no exchange will ever take place."

People familiar with the U.S. proposal have said it envisions trading Griner and Whelan for a notorious Russian arms trader, Viktor Bout. He is serving a 25-year sentence in the U.S. after being convicted of conspiracy to kill U.S. citizens and providing aid to a terrorist organization.

The call between Blinken and Lavrov marked the highest-level known contact between Washington and Moscow since Russia sent troops into Ukraine more than five months ago, underlining the public pressure that the White House has faced to get Griner released.

Griner was arrested as she was returning to play for a team in Russia, where she has competed since 2014. Blinken said Friday that her conviction and sentence "compounds the injustice that has been done to her." □

France's going through its most severe drought ever, PM says

PARIS (AP) — French Prime Minister Elisabeth Borne warned that France is facing its "most severe drought" ever recorded and announced the activation of a government crisis unit.

Borne said in a written statement on Friday that

many areas in France are going through a "historic situation" as the country endures its third heatwave this summer.

"The exceptional drought we are currently experiencing is depriving many municipalities of water and is a tragedy for our farmers,

our ecosystems and biodiversity," the statement said. Weather forecasts suggest that the heat, which increases evaporation and water needs, could continue for the next 15 days, possibly making the situation even more worrying, the statement stressed.

The government's crisis unit will be in charge of monitoring the situation in the hardest-hit areas and coordinate measures like bringing drinking water to some places.

It will also monitor the impact of the drought on France's energy production, transport infrastructure and agriculture.

French energy giant EDF said on Friday it had to temporarily cut power production at two of its nuclear plants which use river water to cool reactors. □



The fountains of Concorde plaza are empty in Paris, France, as Europe is under an extreme heat wave on Wednesday, Aug. 3, 2022.

Associated Press

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14 die in fire at pub in Thailand, many critically injured

By **TASSANEE VEJPONGSA**

BANGKOK (AP) — Fourteen people were killed and dozens badly injured when a fire broke out early Friday at a crowded music pub in eastern Thailand, police and rescue workers said. At least a dozen survivors were in critical condition. Videos on social media showed thick black smoke and then flames pouring from the front entrance as people attempted to flee, some with their clothing on fire. Police said the fire was reported around 12:45 a.m. The Mountain B pub in Sattahip district of Chonburi province, about 160 kilometers (100 miles) southeast of Bangkok, was lined with flammable sound-proofing, and it took two hours for firefighters to put out the blaze, Manop Theprith of a private emergency rescue service group told Thailand's PPTV television news. His group said 40 people had been injured. Several witnesses described seeing smoke and fire on the ceiling near the stage, followed by explosions. Thirteen people died at the scene and another person with burns over 90%



Major fire damage fills the interior at the Mountain B pub in the Sattahip district of Chonburi province, about 160 kilometers (100 miles) southeast of Bangkok, Thailand.

Associated Press

of his body died later, police, rescuers and Queen Sirikit Naval Hospital said. The hospital said 15 patients required intubation, with most suffering third-degree burns over more than 60% of their bodies. Two patients were transferred to a hospital in Bangkok for advanced treatment. "All the patients are considered to be in critical condition," said Capt. Anucha

Likitvong, chief of the hospital's medical team. "In a medical sense, the situation for patients suffering from this degree of burns can change sharply in the next 48 hours." The cause of the fire is under investigation, provincial police chief Maj. Gen. Atthasit Kijjahan told PPTV. He said the pub's owner and staff were giving statements to police and investigators were col-

lecting evidence. "The fire started at the top right corner of the stage," a witness identified only as Nana told PPTV. "The singer must have seen it too, so he shouted 'fire' and threw away the microphone." "I am quite shocked. But I am lucky that when I saw the fire, I could get myself together and get out of there," she said, adding that she saw several pub

security guards with their clothing on fire. A waitress, Thanyapat Sornsuwanhiran, told Thai television reporters that she also saw smoke near the stage. "I shouted 'fire' to customers, and I was near the doors, so I directed them out. I kept shouting 'fire, fire' and the security guards were also helping lead people out," she said. A DJ at the pub who did not identify himself told PPTV that the fire had spread quickly, in about a minute, when he heard the sound of an explosion, shattering windows. Police chief Atthasit said the club had three entrances: at the front, on the side for unloading goods and at the back. Thai public television station TPBS reported that the back door was often locked. Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-ocha urged that business operators and officials ensure that safety measures are in place for entertainment venues nationwide, especially in areas with large numbers of tourists arriving after measures to control the coronavirus were eased. □

Farmers' group: Talks with Dutch govt delivered 'too little'

By **MIKE CORDER**

THE HAGUE, Netherlands

(AP) — The leader of the Netherlands' top agricultural lobby group said that a first round of talks Friday with a delegation led by Prime Minister Mark Rutte about the government's nitrogen emissions reduction goals delivered "at the moment, too little" for thousands of farmers living in uncertainty. The emission targets have sparked disruptive protests in recent weeks and Johan Remkes, a veteran political bridge builder who led Friday's talks, acknowledged that there is a "deep crisis of confidence" between the parties, while also describing the discussions as "exceptionally constructive." Further talks are planned

in an attempt to ease the crisis. Rutte said dialogue is "crucial" to restore confidence. Sjaak van der Tak, chairman of the main farmers' lobby group LTO, that represents some 30,000 farms in the Netherlands, said the government had given ground in the talks, but "at the moment, too little." "The Cabinet did not want to make more concessions, the Cabinet apparently needs more time to prepare for the next talks," he said. Two main activist farmers' organizations demanding concessions from the government did not attend the talks in the central city of Utrecht because they say they do not trust Remkes, a member of Rutte's political party, but they were repre-

sented by LTO. Farmers angry at the target of slashing nitrogen emissions 50% by 2030 have blockaded supermarket distribution centers, parked tractors on highways and dumped garbage including manure and asbestos on roads in recent weeks. Rutte has criticized what he said are small groups of farmers who he says have endangered others with the nature of their protests. "Willfully endangering others, damaging our infrastructure and threatening people who help clean up is beyond all limits," he wrote on Twitter last week. Remkes said the crisis of confidence "goes deeper than the current nitrogen discussion" and has been caused in part by years of government agricul-



Protesting farmers talk at a blockade outside a distribution center for supermarket chain Aldi in the town of Drachten, northern Netherlands, Monday, July 4, 2022.

Associated Press

tural policy and a feeling among farmers that their efforts in recent years to reduce emissions have not been acknowledged. The government has been forced to act after courts in recent years began blocking permits for infrastructure and housing projects because the country was missing its emissions targets.

The government has earmarked an extra 24.3 billion euros (\$25.6 billion) to finance agricultural reforms that will likely make many farmers drastically reduce their number of livestock or get rid of them altogether. Provincial authorities have been given a year to formulate plans to cut emissions. □

First vice-president of Fedecamaras Venezuela: “Businessmen and other stakeholders continue with great optimism for the possibility of reopening the border”

ORANJESTAD – Since 2019, the border between Aruba and Venezuela has been closed, both for direct flights and direct maritime transport. This has had an impact on different sectors, mainly on commerce. During an interview with our reporter, Mr. Adan Celis, first vice-president of Fedecamaras Venezuela, explained the importance, and plans of sensitization to end the border closing between the two countries.

Celis, who is on a visit to Aruba and had plans to meet with the minister of Labor, Energy and Integration, Glenbert Croes, explained during his interview that the topic of sensitization has a very important role in order to reach the objective of reopening the border. “Sensitize public opinion and sensitize the officials from the Venezuelan government as well as the governments of the ABC islands, in order to lift the restrictions between these sister nations”, Celis said.

He said that beyond the differences that might exist between governments, the people need to be united, there must be no one taking away liberty and suppressing the people, and he assures that there are ways to keep everything under control without the

need to close the border.

About three years since the closing of the border, the negotiation processes to achieve the objective of reopening the border proved to be complicated processes requiring a lot of diplomacy between both countries, as well as concrete agreements regarding a lot of necessary control measures. But Celis says that they remain optimistic that soon the border can be reopened for commerce.

“I believe in the process we are in, and if we continue doing this, the businessmen and many other people involved in the subject will continue with a lot of optimism, the reality that we can reopen the borders for commerce but also for the exchange of people”, Celis added.

Without a doubt the relationship between the two nations, Aruba and Venezuela, is one with a lot of history, and during our interview, Celis highlighted the ‘historical brotherhood’ between the peoples. He pointed out that there are possibilities for all type of commerce, tourism, and the opportunities for health-care. Despite the humanitarian crisis in Venezuela, Celis emphasizes that there



is still a very good health system in the country, particularly the private health system, which he indicated still counts with very good doctors.

Celis mentioned also that Venezuelan tourism plays a very important role for the Dutch islands and of course all the factors for commerce. “Thus we will continue with this process of sensitization and we will continue with the effort to reopen the borders, and to have exchange of persons and products, as it was tra-

ditionally and as we hope it will continue”, he finalized.

The situation regarding the closing of the border between Aruba and Venezuela started when Venezuela's president, Nicolas Maduro decided to close the border for a period of 72 hours, starting on the 5th of January 2018. This measure was directed to Curaçao and Bonaire, and back then, Maduro said that this decision was to “put pressure for a healthy exchange”.

In 2019, prime minister of Aruba, Evelyn Wever-Croes noted that the vice-president of Venezuela gave declarations that they had decided to reopen the border, but on the 10th of May, Wever-Croes signed a decree to close the border. This was motivated by the political, economic and social situation that the neighboring country was going through, during which Aruba registered and increase in the amount of immigrants, which represented a public order and national security problem for Aruba.

Last month, news circulated on some media and social media indicating that

the border between Venezuela and Aruba would reopen and direct flights between the countries would resume. This news caused a commotion, but Wever-Croes denied its veracity. “We are keeping [the border] closed, pending on Venezuelan authorities. We are working on it], she said. To squelch the rumors, the government of Aruba sent an official press release to inform the people of Aruba that the border would not reopen: “We inform that the government of Aruba is still in negotiations with Venezuelan authorities. The prime minister asks every citizen of our country, particularly Venezuelan citizens who have made our country their home, to remain calm and not believe news that are not from the government. Aruba's government continues with the efforts for a responsible and controlled reopening of the border, but for this, more cooperation from Venezuelan authorities is needed.” It is still not known if or when the border between Aruba and Venezuela will reopen, but as Mr. Celis indicated, the reopening of the border presents big opportunities for commercial exchange that will greatly benefit both countries.



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Police enforcing child seat law for children under 12 years in the automobile

Oranjestad - The Police Department has announced that they will start enforcing the Child Seat law that is applicable for any child under the age of 12 while in an automobile.

These controls will take place near kindergarten and elementary schools. The Police Department has seen an increase in injuries in children who are involved in car accidents.

The leading cause of these injuries is because of the lack of child safety. It is too often that parents allow their child under the age of 12 to sit either in the front passenger seat with no seatbelt on, and even if

the child is in the backseat, they are not wearing a seatbelt or sitting in a child seat as indicated by law.

The Police are warning parents, grandparents, and everyone operating an automobile with children younger than 12 years, that the safety of the child goes first. Child safety is having a child strapped in a child seat or booster seat and buckled up in the backseat.

Under our traffic laws, "the driver of a motor vehicle is prohibited from carrying children under the age of

12 in the front passenger seat. A driver is not permitted to transport a child under the age of 12 on public roads if the child is not in the rear seat, neither in a correctly installed child seat or booster seat and always with the seat belt on.

This law serves to protect innocent children during traffic accidents. Child protection also applies in traffic. Parents have time to get a proper child seat or booster seat and ensure their backseat safety belts are properly functioning. □



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Honoring of loyal visitors at Tamarijn Aruba All Inclusive Resort

EAGLE BEACH - Recently, Aruba Tourism Authority representative Marouska Heyliger had the great pleasure in honoring many loyal Aruba visitors with their distinctive certificates. These certificates are a way to say "Masha Danki" for continuously choosing Aruba as a favorite vacation destination. The titles are as following: 10+ years "Distinguished Visitor", 20+ years "Goodwill Ambassador" and 36+ years "Emerald Ambassador".

The honorees were Lisa Fox and Lea Kelly, residents of Johnston, Rhode Island and as well as the Roff Family consisting of Verena Roff, Ziva Roff, Jai Roff and Lysette Roff who are residents of Kent, England that were honored as Distinguished Visitors.

The Aruba Tourism Authority also honored Robert and Cheryl Serrecchia, residents of North Scituate, Rhode Island who were honored as Goodwill Ambassadors.

sadors.

This symbolic honorary title is presented on behalf of the Minister of Tourism as a token of appreciation to the guests who visit Aruba between the 10-20-35 and more consecutive year mark.

The top reasons for returning to the island provided by the honorees were the beautiful beaches, friendly people, safe environment, lovely food and the Island being a home away from home.

Ms. Marouska Heyliger & Olga Ruiz representing the Aruba Tourism Authority and members of Tamarijn Aruba All Inclusive Resort bestowed the certificate of the Ambassadors and handed some presents to the honoree and thanked them for choosing Aruba as their vacation destination and as their home away from home for so many years on behalf of the Government of Aruba. □



Honoring of loyal visitors at Aruba Beach Club Resort

EAGLE BEACH - Recently, Aruba Tourism Authority had the great pleasure in



honoring many loyal Aruba visitors with their distinctive certificates. These certificates are a way to say "Masha Danki" for continuously choosing Aruba as a favorite vacation destination. The titles are as following: 10+ years "Distinguished Visitor", 20+ years "Goodwill Ambassador" and 36+ years "Emerald Ambassador".

The honorees are Kylie Marie McCarthy resident of Massachusetts United States, who has been honored as Distinguished Visitor.

This symbolic honorary title is presented on behalf of the Minister of Tourism as a token of appreciation to

the guests who visit Aruba between the 10-20-35 and more consecutive year mark.

This loyal visitor loves coming to the island for the friendly people, the weather and the beautiful beach.

Ms. Marouska Heyliger & Ms. Olga Ruiz representing the Aruba Tourism Authority and members of Aruba Beach Club Resort bestowed the certificate of the Ambassador and handed some presents to the honoree and thanked them for choosing Aruba as their vacation destination and as their home away from home for so many years on behalf of the Government of Aruba.

Aruba's underwater wonderland



ORANJESTAD - Exploring the underwater wonders is something you should definitely do during your stay in Aruba. The underwater world has everything to offer that makes a snorkel trip so exceptional; an impressive, colorful sea life with exotic fishes, turtles and beautiful coral reef. The historic shipwrecks, located on the Aruban seabed are also worth a visit. Aruba is known for its white beaches and blue oceans, which means there are many fascinating under water spots, where you can take your snorkeling gear and we selected the top spots for you.

Tres Trapi

Tres Trapi means tree steps in Papiamentu, Papiamentu is together with Dutch the official language spoken on Aruba. The beach is called Tres Trapi because it is accessible by the tree steps carved into the rocks. Tres Trapi is a small rocky beach, located on the north-western side of the island, approximately 5 to 10 minute drive from Palm Beach. From the unique steps you can easily walk over the beach into the clear and turquoise blue ocean. While snorkeling you will encounter all kind of tropical fishes and sea stars. The kind of starfish you will find in the Aruban waters is the red cushion sea star. This is a starfish that is

commonly found in the shallow waters of the Caribbean sea and if you are lucky during your snorkeling visit to Tres Trapi, you may come across one of the green sea turtles. Respect the animal, keep your distance and enjoy the view. Also remember; it is a once in a life time experience.

Antilla shipwreck

Antilla is a 400-foot-long long ship, built in 1939 in Hamburg, Germany. Antilla came to Aruba, because it had to find a neutral port. When Germany invaded the Netherlands on May 10, 1940, the crew decided to let their own ship sink, to prevent it from falling into the hands of the Dutch Navy. Antilla lies on its portside in Malmok bay, and the sunken world war two ship is now one of Aruba's most popular snorkeling and dive spots. However, the ship wreck can only be reached by boat. The ship is visible from the surface and during your snorkeling trip you be surrounded by hundreds of tropical fishes, but the ship wreck alone is already impressive enough.

Baby Beach

Baby beach; a white beach, with a crystal blue ocean. The beach is located on the southern part of the island. On the way to the famous beach, you will drive through the old

capital of Aruba, San Nicolas. The old Aruban culture

can be still felt and experienced here, so do not hesitate to get out of your car and walk around for a while. Baby beach is a child friendly beach, since it is shallow and the water has a pleasant temperature. The name therefore fits well with the beach. Baby beach is an excellent beach for snorkeling, especially if you want to go with small children, because the water remains shallow and there are still many underwater wonders to see. In the ocean there is an area marked until where it is recommended to snorkel and on the beach you will find different facilities. It is a perfect beach to spend your day snorkeling and relaxing.

Mangel Halto

Mangel Halto beach is located in Savaneta, on the southern-west part of the island. The beach is different from the other beaches in Aruba; it is beach full of mangroves. You reach the beach by a bridge through the mangroves and then you will have several entrances to the sea. There are diverse spots where you can enjoy a perfect beach day, wooden stairs made to enter the water and a dock to sit on and enjoy the view. Mangel Halto is also worth a visit for the snorkeling experience. Inside the bay, the water is clear and you find many colorful fish. Outside the bay is a bit more challenging for beginners because of the wind and the waves, but the coral is alive and it is just like snorkel heaven. □



A.T.A. studying the impact of the increase in cost of life on the demand for tourism on Aruba

ORANJESTAD – Aruba always positioned itself as a destination with higher prices, and was able to be successful at this. Aruba Tourism Authority will continue its efforts to direct itself to the type of tourist that is willing to pay this price and see the value in it; however, A.T.A. considers that it is necessary to investigate when the impact of an increase in prices will have on the demand for vacations on Aruba, and will continue monitoring this.

The tourism authority also pointed out, once again, that it is important to focus on providing the adequate level of value for money! And this is under pressure.

For a few months already, A.T.A. has been in dialogue with more than 75 different partners; organizations, government departments and trade unions in Aruba and the kingdom of the Netherlands, focusing on various issues that have an impact on, among other things, tourism and the cost of vacation, something that once again will have a direct impact on the way of life of everyone on Aruba.

Seeing the importance of tourism and economic recovery as a destination and nation, A.T.A. focused on three studies in order to give advice on decisions, based on investigations and thus on facts.

In the month of April, the 'Price Competitive Study' was completed, in which the cost of a vacation for an American visitor – as our main market – to Aruba was compared to the cost of a vacation to other destinations in the Caribbean. The goal of this study was to see different types of vacations, like family travel, honeymoon and couple's travel, and what the price per person would be for the different elements of each type of vacation, for example, flight, accommodation, food and drink,



transport and activities. In the case of a family trip, the price per person for Aruba is significantly higher compared to the other islands; in case of a honeymoon, the price is also higher for Aruba compared to the other island; and in the case of a couple's vacation for 'empty nesters', the price per person for Aruba is the second highest, behind the U.S. Virgin Islands. This doesn't come as a surprise but it's good to reestablish how Aruba is already carrying a higher price tag and thus needs to be very careful regarding decisions that might increase the price of a vacation, and must evaluate how this can impact the demand for Aruba.

A study is being carried out on the impact on demand from the increase of the price for a vacation. For this, the University of Central Florida (UCF) was hired. The first part of the study is focused on the effectiveness of marketing, in order to establish how effective A.T.A.'s strategy is and among other things, what

kind of funds A.T.A. needs to have available in order to keep pushing for the desired results. Currently work is being carried out on the second part of the study, in which the focus is on the impact that an increase in price (through the introduction of VAT) will have on the demand for tourism and on the amount of nights that a tourist stays in Aruba. This along with other elements including a high inflation rate. Based on different scenarios, they will evaluate the impact on demand. It is hoped to have the results of this part of the study ready between the end of August and the beginning of September. The third part of the study will focus on the perception of visitors on a potential increase in prices. With these

results, the tourism authority will try to find out what kind of message is needed to communicate with the visitors when there is a tax increase or other aspect that can impact the cost of a vacation to Aruba. For this study, a survey is being carried out among visitors.

Seeing the economic situation worldwide, it's necessary to take into consideration not only the local aspects that have an impact on the cost of a vacation to Aruba, but also inflation projected on the various markets. The main market for Aruba, the United States is seeing very high inflation currently – going from 8.6% in May to 9.1% in June, a record in 41 years. For 2023, inflation between 2 and 2.5% is expected, but there

is a lot of uncertainty and worry continues for a possible recession in 2023 and 2024.

As mentioned, A.T.A. will continue its focus on the above mentioned studies and will share the results with the government of Aruba and other key partners in order to take decisions with the necessary prudence, and obviously all directed to reaching goals in 2023 and continue stimulating the trajectory of strong recovery. Seeing the importance of tourism and how it impacts every other aspect, including government's projected income, as well as the quality of life for every inhabitant of the island, caution is necessary.



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By THOMAS JOSEPH

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Yesterday's answer

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4 Antigone's
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5 Female
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8-6

AXYDLBAAXR
is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

8-6

CRYPTOQUOTE

K E M ' P T E J O U P P N H P F H Z W U

Z E G H J U P N U S V O N P N E G Y U

V M Y E F U E M U ' Y Y P E J F .

— G M R M E X M

Yesterday's Cryptoquote: IF YOU DO NOT CHANGE DIRECTION, YOU MAY END UP WHERE YOU ARE HEADING. — LAO TZU

What Equifax's credit score errors mean for consumers

By AMANDA BARROSO and LAUREN SCHWAHN of Nerd-Wallet

Equifax, one of the three major credit bureaus, announced that a computer coding error resulted in the miscalculation of credit scores for consumers in a three-week period between March 17 and April 6. For 300,000 consumers, the error shifted credit scores as much as 25 points. The changes to credit scores did not show up on credit reports, Equifax said in a press release.

While the error caused scores to shift in positive and negative directions, a 25-point drop in your credit score could do some major financial damage, especially if you're on the cusp of one of the credit bands. For some consumers, that could mean less access to financial services and products like car loans and home mortgages, as well as credit cards with good terms.

NerdWallet spoke to credit experts and consumer advocates to nail down what you should be doing in the wake of this Equifax error.

HOW TO TELL IF YOU WERE AFFECTED

It might not be easy to determine if you were affected by this Equifax error. "To the naked eye, a consumer would never know they were impacted, to the good or to the bad," credit expert John Ulzheimer said in an email.

Equifax says it's "collaborating with our customers to determine the actual impact to consumers," although it's unclear how or when they will notify the impacted customers, if at all. "This is not the consumer's fault," says Chi Chi Wu, an attorney at the National Consumer Law Center.

"And it is outrageous that an error by Equifax harmed consumers and now they have to go back and fix it." Follow these steps to help safeguard your score in the wake of the Equifax error:

REVIEW ANY NOTICES RELATED TO DENIED APPLICATIONS DURING THIS PERIOD



This July 21, 2012, file photo shows signage at the corporate headquarters of Equifax Inc. in Atlanta.

Associated Press

If you applied for a car or home loan or a credit card between March 17 and April 6 and your application was denied or you had to pay more potentially as a result of this miscalculated score you might have some recourse if you received one of the documents below:

ADVERSE ACTION NOTICE:

If your application was denied, you should have received an adverse action notice. Federal law requires creditors to tell you why your application was denied and which bureau they got their information from, so it's important to review this letter to understand better if the coding error impacted you.

If you were declined "because of things that showed up on your credit report, if it has to do with your credit score in some way, shape or form, then it's worth going back and pulling a copy of your credit report and your credit score," says Bruce McClary, senior vice president of communications for the National Foundation for Credit Counseling. It's also worth "finding out what credit score the creditor was using to evaluate you," he says.

RISK-BASED PRICING NOTICE:

If you applied for a loan or credit card during this period and were given less favorable terms (e.g., higher interest rates), you should have received a risk-based pricing notice.

If consumers applied for a credit card or loan during this time and did not

get one of these two notices, then, according to Ulzheimer, "they were not denied and they were not adversely approved with disadvantaged terms."

CHECK YOUR EQUIFAX CREDIT REPORT

Checking your credit report should be your next step. Here, you're looking to see if a hard inquiry or a request to check your credit shows up. This "hard pull" is confirmation that you applied for credit during the three-week time frame when the error went undetected by Equifax. Disputing the error with Equifax is not an option since the miscalculated scores did not appear on credit reports. "There wasn't an error on their Equifax credit reports that required an investigation and correction," Ulzheimer said. "This was a programming error that wasn't impacted by how a consumer acted or paid their bills."

CONTACT YOUR LENDER AND EQUIFAX

If affected, contact your lender and ask it to reassess your application or loan terms.

Getting rate changes on a credit card will be easier than changing the terms of a mortgage or car loan, according to Wu.

If you believe you may have been affected, you can also try calling Equifax's customer service at 1-888-378-4329.

BE ON THE LOOKOUT FOR A MESSAGE FROM EQUIFAX

Keep an eye out for further communications from Equifax. □

Forecasters trim hurricane season outlook a bit, still busy

By SETH BORENSTEIN
AP Science Writer

This hurricane season may be a tad quieter than initially projected, but it is still likely to be busier than normal, government forecasters and others say.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration on Thursday trimmed their hurricane season outlook from a 65% chance for above normal activity to 60% and increased the odds of a normal season from 25% to 30% because of uneven sea surface temperature, including a patch of cooler water off Portugal.

Parts of the Atlantic are warmer than normal, but the variability had forecasters "backing off on the higher end" of their predictions, said lead hurricane outlook forecaster Matthew Rosencrans.

The weather agency now predicts 14 to 20 named storms instead of its May forecast which was 14 to 21. The predicted number of hurricanes remains the same at six to 10 while those storms that hit major category of at least 111 mph are now forecast to be three to five instead of three to six. The forecast includes the three tropical storms that formed in June and early July, about average for this time of year, but quieter than the last few years.

An average season has 14 named storms with seven becoming hurricanes and three of those being majors, according to NOAA. There were 21 named storms last year, a record 30 in 2020 and 18 in 2019.

"While the tropics have been relatively quiet over the last month, remember that it only takes one land-falling storm to devastate a community. This is especially critical as we head



Floodwaters slowly recede in the aftermath of Hurricane Ida in Lafitte, La., Sept. 1, 2021.

Associated Press

into what the team here anticipates is likely to be a busy peak of the season," Rosencrans said in a press briefing.

A persistent La Nina the natural cooling of parts of the Pacific that changes weather worldwide weak trade winds and some warmer than normal Atlantic water temperatures still point to a busy season, Rosencrans said. But the patches of cool water, with temperatures closer to normal than originally predicted in some places, "could kind of tamp down on activity," he said.

Colorado State University, which pioneered hurricane season forecasts, also dialed back its predictions for the season compared to what it said in April. The

school now predicts 18 named storms, down from 19, with eight becoming hurricanes, down from nine. Colorado State predicts four major hurricanes, same as it forecast in April. "I don't think the season is going to be a dud, but it's taking its sweet time getting going," said Colorado State University hurricane researcher Phil Klotzbach, head of the school's forecast team.

Klotzbach said this year with its strong La Nina and nearer to average water temperatures seems similar to 1999, 2000, 2011 and last year, which featured a devastating Hurricane Ida that hit Louisiana and sloshed into the Northeast with heavy rain, causing many deaths in the New

York-New Jersey region.

"Hopefully, we'll have no Idas this year, but the overall environment is very similar," Klotzbach said.

About 90% of Atlantic storms happen from August on. Hurricane season peaks from mid-August to mid-October with the season ending on Nov. 30. □



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Caribbean Speed Printers N.V.
Aruba Bank N.V. Acc. #332668
Caribbean Mercantile Bank N.V.
Acc. #23951903
RBC Royal Bank Acc. #1330772

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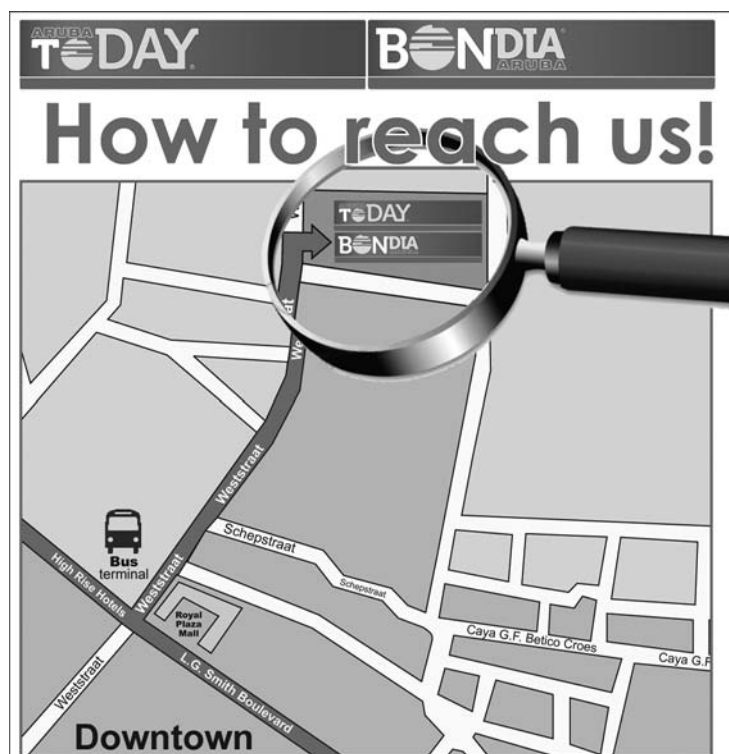
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Pro Football Hall of Fame recognizes women's impact

By ROB MAADDI

CANTON, Ohio (AP) — A 15-year-old boy made his way through the the Pro Football Hall of Fame museum on Friday, checking out the memorabilia and bronze busts before stopping to take a picture of Jen Welter's blue-and-pink jersey to send to his younger sister.

"She will love this," said Zach Fleming, a Pittsburgh Steelers fan in town with his dad for the first time. "I want her to know girls can make the Hall of Fame, too."

Welter became the first woman to coach an NFL game in 2015 when she joined the Arizona Cardinals as an assistant coaching intern for training camp and the preseason.

The shirt, pants and sneakers she wore on the sideline in all four exhibition games are on display at a new exhibit in the Pro Football Today area of the museum.

Welter's game-worn Texas Revolution jersey, her Dallas Diamonds helmet and a commemorative helmet signed by Team Australia during her time as head coach of the national team is also displayed in a separate glass enclosure.

The "Women's Impact on Football" exhibit debuted ahead of this week's enshrinement festivities. It features artifacts from



This photo shows a display with Jen Welter's blue-and-pink jersey, Friday, Aug. 5, 2022 in Canton, Ohio.

Associated Press

women who have played, coached, officiated and broadcast the game at its highest level.

"There's a lot of women involved in pro football and we wanted to recognize their contributions and tell their stories," said Ben Ankrum, assistant curator

at the Pro Football Hall of Fame. "We've had other exhibits featuring women in pro football and it got to the point where we could do something larger and more permanent." Other items on display include:

—Callie Brownson's game-

worn jacket and a signed ball from the game in which she became the first woman to serve as a position coach for an NFL regular-season game with the Cleveland Browns on Nov. 29, 2020. Brownson filled in as the tight ends coach when Drew Petzing didn't

travel with the team after his wife gave birth to the couple's first child.

—Katie Sowers' 49ers polo from the 2017 season, when she became only the second woman to serve as a full-time NFL coach. San Francisco hired Sowers as an assistant for the 217 season. Kathryn Smith was the first female full-time coach with the Buffalo Bills in 2016.

—The shoes Buccaneers assistant defensive line coach Lori Locust wore when she and assistant strength and conditioning coach Maral Javadifar became the first female coaches to win a Super Bowl after Tampa Bay's victory over Kansas City on Feb. 7, 2021.

—Maia Chaka's referee uniform and penalty flags. Chaka became the first Black woman to officiate an NFL game in 2021.

—Six-time national champion quarterback Allison Cahill's signed jersey from her MVP performance in the Boston Renegades' victory in the 2021 Women's Alliance of Professional Football National Championship Game played at Tom Benson Hall of Fame Stadium. —Hannah Storm's and Andrea Kremer's headsets from 2018, when they became the first all-female broadcast team to call an NFL regular-season game. □

Chun takes halfway lead at Women's British Open



In Gee Chun of South Korea plays her tee shot from the 3rd during the second round of the Women's British Open golf championship, in Muirfield, Scotland Friday, Aug. 5, 2022.

Associated Press

MUIRFIELD, Scotland (AP) —

In Gee Chun is making another strong run at a major. The South Korean golfer took the halfway lead at the Women's British Open after a 5-under 66 in the second round on Friday, putting her in position to challenge for a second major title of the year, and fourth overall.

Chun had an 8-under total of 134, putting her one shot ahead of South Africa's Ashleigh Buhai and Sweden's Madelene Sagstrom, who both shot 65.

Seven-time major winner Inbee Park, also of South Korea, was a shot further back after a 67.

Chun, who won the Women's PGA Championship at

Congressional in June despite consecutive weekend rounds of 75, carded six birdies and a solitary bogey in her round at Muirfield. Sunday's winner will earn more than \$1 million but Chun said she was also motivated by a slightly smaller cash prize on offer.

"Before the start of the tournament my caddie Dean and I talked about the course and after that we had a little bit of betting," Chun said. "If I make a bogey-free round he's said he's going to buy me dinner and pay me 100 dollars each day. So before each round it's like setting another goal. That mindset helped a lot on the course.

I had two bogeys over the last two days but I want to keep trying to make a bogey-free round."

Of Chun's four LPGA Tour victories, three have come at majors, including the 2016 Evian Championship and 2015 U.S. Women's Open.

On Friday, she even got some help from one of the gusts of wind that make Scottish links golf so tricky. "I have a great reason to love the Scottish wind now," Chun said. "My ball was around the edge of the hole today, and after like three seconds it dropped. So now I can enjoy more the Scottish wind."

Buhai looked on course

to claim the halfway lead when she made an eagle and four birdies to race to the turn in 30, but after picking up another shot on the 11th she could not make any further gains and dropped her only shot of the day on the last.

Overnight leader Hinako Shibuno followed her opening 65 with a 73 to fall four shots off the pace.

Jessica Korda, who was second after the first round, settled for a 74 and was in a tie for 17th. Four-time major winner Laura Davies, making her 42nd appearance at the event at the age of 58, missed the cut after an 81 which included a 10 on the 18th. □

NCAA hoops leagues grapple with unequal pay for women's refs

By **DOUG FEINBERG**
AP Basketball Writer

The NCAA earned praise last year when it agreed to pay referees at its men's and women's basketball tournaments equally. The gesture only cost about \$100,000, a tiny fraction of the roughly \$900 million networks pay annually to broadcast March Madness.

Now, as the NCAA examines various disparities across men's and women's sports, pressure is rising to also pay referees equally during the regular season. Two Division I conferences told The Associated Press they plan to equalize pay, and another is considering it. Others are resisting change, even though the impact on their budgets would be negligible.

"The ones that are (equalizing pay) are reading the writing on the wall," said Michael Lewis, a marketing professor at Emory University's Goizueta Business School.

The details of NCAA referee pay are closely guarded, but The Associated Press obtained data for the 2021-22 season that show 15 of the NCAA's largest — and most profitable — conferences paid veteran referees for men's basketball an average of 22% more per game.

That level of disparity is wider than the gender pay gap across the U.S. economy, where women earn 82 cents for every dollar a man earns, according to the 2020 census. And it is an overwhelming disadvantage for women, who make up less than 1% of the referees officiating men's games.

Dawn Staley, the head coach for the University of South Carolina Gamecocks — the women's national champions — said referees on the men's side should be "stepping up" and advocating for equal pay for women's referees. "They don't do anything different," she said. "Why should our officials get paid less for taking the (expletive) we give them?"

The people who provided



Referee Dee Kantner works in the second half of an NCAA college basketball game between Tennessee and Vanderbilt Monday, Jan. 5, 2015, in Nashville, Tenn.

Associated Press

AP with data for nearly half of the NCAA's 32 Division I conferences have direct knowledge of pay scales, and they did so on condition of anonymity because the information is considered private.

The Northeast Conference had the widest per-game pay disparity among the NCAA leagues AP analyzed, with the most experienced referees for men's games earning 48% more. The Atlantic-10 paid veteran men's refs 44% more, while the Colonial Athletic Association paid them 38% more. (Only the Ivy League paid veteran officials equally in the data AP reviewed.)

Of the conferences with unequal pay contacted by AP, two — the Pac-12 and the Northeast Conference — said they plan to level the playing field starting next season. A third, the Patriot League, which had a 33% pay gap last year, said it is reviewing equity for officials in all sports. "Pay is part of that," commissioner Jennifer Heppel said.

The Pac-12 paid referees equally a decade ago, but allowed a disparity to build over time, according to associate commissioner Teresa Gould. She said returning to equal pay is "the right thing to do."

NEC commissioner Noreen

Morris said the decision to equalize pay was an easy one to make once it realized that basketball was the only sport where it was not compensating referees equally.

Relative to the amounts of money these leagues generate, the cost of bridging the pay gap can seem small.

For example, the SEC paid referees for men's games 10%, or \$350, more than those officiating women's games. Over the course of a season, it would cost the SEC a couple hundred thousand dollars to pay them equally — a sliver of the \$3 billion deal it signed with ESPN to broadcast all of its sports starting in 2024. The most experienced Division I referees — for men's or women's games — are well paid. Some earn more than \$150,000 in a season, officiating dozens of games across multiple conferences.

Newer referees earn far less, supplementing income from another job.

All NCAA referees are independent contractors, with no union representing their interests, and all have to cover their own travel expenses.

The busiest referees can work five or six games a week in different cities, running up and down the

court for 40 minutes one night, getting a few hours of sleep, and then waking up at 4 a.m. to catch a flight to their next destination.

Dee Kantner, a veteran referee of women's games who works for multiple conferences, finds it frustrating to have to justify equal pay. "If I buy an airline ticket and tell them I'm doing a women's basketball game they aren't going to charge me less," she said.

"Do you value women's basketball that much less?" Kantner said. "How are we rationalizing this still?"

Several conference commissioners said the men's and women's games do not generate equal amounts of revenue, and that the level of play is not equal, and so referee salaries are set accordingly.

"Historically we have treated each referee pool as a separate market," said Big East Commissioner Val Ackerman. "We paid rates that allow us to be competitive for services at our level. I think the leagues are entitled to look at different factors here. I don't see it as an equity issue — I see it as a market issue."

The Big East pays referees working its men's games 22% more, and Ackerman said there is no imminent plan to make a change.

Atlantic-10 Commissioner Bernadette McGlade said the market-based approach is what enables her to offer some of the highest per-game rates across the NCAA. "We get the most experienced, most qualified officials in the country," she said.

Veteran referees officiating in the Atlantic-10 are paid \$3,300 for men's games, compared with \$2,300 for women's games, according to data reviewed by AP. Seven other conferences had higher per-game rates — and narrower gender gaps — last year, the data show.

Of the roughly 800 referees officiating women's basketball this past season, 43% were female, a proportion that's been relatively consistent over the past decade. But just six women officiated men's games last year — a number that has slowly grown over the last few years.

Penny Davis, the NCAA's supervisor of officials, said conferences are trying to recruit more women to officiate men's games, which is another way to help bridge the gender pay gap.

But Davis says she would hate to see even fewer women refereeing women's basketball. "We don't want to lose our best and brightest," she said.

A decade ago, referees working the men's and women's NCAA Tournament were paid equally. But as the profitability of the men's tournament skyrocketed, its budget grew too — and so did pay for referees.

Both McGlade and Ackerman praised the NCAA for restoring equal pay at the March tournaments. "We're mindful of the what the NCAA did for the tournament," Ackerman said. "NCAA Tournament games are closer but not entirely a common officiating experience."

Ivy League executive director Robin Harris disagrees. "We decided a while ago that it was the right thing to do to pay them the same amount. They are doing the same job." □

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